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TWO-PARTY REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

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Two-Party and Multiparty Governments

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Although modes of representation come in a variety of institutional forms, they can be usefully divided into two categories: (1) those that seek to have each voter represented by a person or party coming fairly close to a voter's position on the issues, and (2) those that seek to limit a voter's choice to two candidates or parties which encompass a broad cross-section of interests and ideologies. These chapters discuss and compare these two modes of representation in terms of (1) the normative properties of the final outcomes of public policies under each system, (2) the stability of each system, and (3) the possible alienation of voters and resulting instability under each system. I also analyze the specific procedures to be used to best achieve the relative advantages of each system.

Those countries that seek to have separate ideological and interest groups represented by different parties or individuals employ some form of at-large representative system. A voter in a given geographic district votes for one party or individual, or perhaps ranks the different individuals, and two or more parties or individuals are allowed to win votes from the district. These systems do generally result in several parties holding seats in the Parliament. I show that the best procedure for obtaining multiparty representation is the party list system with the entire nation treated as a single district. If one prefers to have voters choose individuals as well as, or instead of, parties, the best procedure is the single-transferable-vote system in which voters rank the different candidate.

All of the so-called "two-party" democracies elect their representatives from single-member districts as in the House of Representatives in the United States. Although this mode of representation does tend to produce fewer parties in the legislature than the at-large systems, it does not generally result in only two parties in the legislature or ensure that one party has a majority of the seats. As I explain in these chapters, a more effective way in the long run to achieve the objective sought from a two-party system is to treat the entire nation (or in federalist systems the region or city) as a district, have voters vote for one party, and if no party receives an absolute majority of votes, have a run-off election between the two parties which received the most votes in the first election.

The logical justification for the two types of systems is quite different. With the two-party system, the goal is to pick that party whose program is deemed best, or which is deemed best to run the government from this election to the next one. The individual voter is closer to comparing the final outcomes he hopes to obtain from government during the next electoral period than merely selecting a representative in the legislature. In contrast, with a multiparty system the voter is choosing that person or party that will represent him best in the legislature. The actual outcomes must be much more in doubt, however, since the voter cannot know what his party's fraction of total seats will be nor that of the others, and thus the issues that will win under the legislative voting rule. The normative properties of the outcomes chosen will depend on the rule used and these are discussed, as are the properties of outcomes under the two-party system.

The stability of each system is discussed at length. An advantage of two-party over multiparty systems is alleged to be their inherent stability. A majority party can implement its program, and survive until the next election. We explain that (1) multiparty systems can be and,

in several countries, have been quite stable. Moreover, the instabilities that have befallen some, e.g. the Weimar Republic, some of the previous republics in France, and post- World War II Italy, are a result of their having combined the executive and legislative functions in the parliament. As I discuss at length, combining these two functions is appropriate in a two-party system, but is not advisable in a multiparty system. A separate executive branch or chief executive should be combined with a parliament assigned a purely legislative function in a multiparty system.

Voters are less likely to be alienated from the political system under a multiparty than under a two-party system, because the party which they vote for generally takes positions on issues closer to what the voter favors than under a two-party system. Evidence consistent with this proposition is discussed.

Representative Democracy--Two Party Government

> The efficient secret of the English Constitution may be described as the close union, the nearly complete fusion, of the executive and legislative powers. No doubt by the traditional theory, as it exists in all the books, the goodness of our constitution consists in the entire separation of the legislative and executive authorities, but in truth its merit consists in their singular approximation. The connecting link is the cabinet. (italics in the original)
>
> Walter Bagehot

Under the proportional representation citizens vote for individuals or parties with the expectation that these representatives will vote in the legislative assembly in accordance with the views of the citizens, who support them. Those voting for the Green Party are not under the illusion that this party will be able to induce the legislative assembly to accept without compromise the radical policies to protect the environment espoused by the Greens. Rather they hope that the Greens' presence in the assembly and radical stance on environmental issues will shift the set of outcomes in the direction of greater protection for the environment. How successful the Green Party will be in this endeavor will depend on its size, the size and constellation of views of the other parties, its skill at parliamentary maneuvering, the voting rule and democratic procedures employed by the assembly, and perhaps still other factors. In choosing a party to support the voter cannot predict the legislative outcomes his vote will help to produce, but he should be able to make a reasonable prediction of the stance his party will take on the public issues at stake.

Under two party representative government the link between a citizen's vote for a particular party and the outcomes from the legislative process is more direct. The two parties compete for the right to form the government,

or more accurately to be the government. With the simple majority rule as the parliamentary voting rule, the party that wins a majority of the seats in the parliament can pass its entire program. With only two parties competing, one must win a majority of the seats. When, during a campaign, a member of one of the parties proclaims what her party will do if it receives a majority of the seats in the parliament, she is not, or at least need not be engaging in hyperbolic rhetoric. Her party can implement its platform without alteration, if it so chooses. When the citizen compares the platforms of the two competing parties, he compares not just the stances on issues the parties will subsequently take in the parliament, but the packages of outcomes that each party is fully capable of providing should it win a majority of seats. The voter chooses as it were among final packages of outcomes.

In the next section we discuss the mechanics of establishing such a system of government. Its properties are described in Sections B and C. The hypothetical two party system developed here is contrasted with real world two party systems in Section D. The issue of whether it is better to choose between persons or parties is taken up in Section E.

A. The Mechanics

The goal, once again, is to establish a system of representation that will result in collective decisions at a given level of government that correspond in an acceptable way to the outcomes desired by the citizens who are affected by these decisions. Under a PR system this goal is accomplished, in principle by representing the preferences of all individuals in the nation on national issues in the national parliament. To find out what these preferences are citizens across the nation choose from a common set of candidates or parties. The votes of all citizens receive equal weight, whether they reside in Hamburg or Stuttgart. Thus, the number of

seats a party gets is determined only by the number of votes it gets, not by where they come from. A given number of votes has the same impact on the electoral outcome, whether they are cast by people concentrated in Hamburg, people concentrated in Stuttgart, or people spread between the two.

Under a two party system the objective is to choose the single party whose platform is most preferred ny the citizens, or the party that most citizens want to see in charge of the government. Once again, however, if it is the national government that is at stake, it is the preferences of all the people in the nation that are to count, and presumably all should count equally. The party with the most votes from across the nation should be empowered to form the government, regardless of whether those votes come from Hamburg, Stuttgart, or a combination of the two.

This logic implies that all of the citizens across the nation be allowed to choose from the same list of parties in a two party system as in a proportional representation system. To ensure that there are only two parties represented in the parliament, a second run-off election can be held between the two parties receiving the most votes in the first election. The final allocation of seats in the parliament is based on the percentage of the vote in the run-off election each party obtains. Thus, as here described, the mechanics of a PR system and of a two party system would be the same up through the first ballot. They would differ in that under a PR system there would be but one round of voting. All parties would take seats in the parliament in proportion to the votes they received in that first balloting (perhaps subject to some minimum cut-offs). Under the two party alternative, voting on the first ballot determines which two parties get to compete on the second (unless, of course, only two parties receive votes on the first

ballot). It is the votes cast on the second ballot that determines the number of seats each party gets in the parliament.

The advantage of two party government is, as the opening quotation of Walter Bagehot indicates, that the executive and legislative functions of government are combined. A single party is authorized by the electorate to form the government and implement its legislative program. This objective is accomplished even under a PR system, whenever a single party wins a majority of the seats of the parliament, if the parliament uses the simple majority rule. Thus, one could modify the procedures just described, and require a run-off election only when no single party won a majority of the seats in the parliament, and not change its fundamental attributes. When a second ballot was not required, the one or more losing parties could take their seats in the parliament according to whatever rule was used to match seats to votes. Since the majority party can essentially dictate the legislative outcomes until the next election, it does not really matter how many parties make up the opposition.

B. The Effects of Two Party Government--Single-Dimensional Issues

Political competition is often described in liberal-conservative, left-right ideological terms. In every two party country in the world, one of the parties is associated with labor and lower income groups and advocates social welfare programs. The other party is associated with business interests, middle and upper income groups and favors a smaller role for government, particularly in the social welfare area. This ideological battlefield is depicted in Figure 10.1. The potential ideological positions of each party are given along the horizontal axis, the number of voters favoring each ideological position on the vertical axis. A unimodal, symmetric distribution of voters is depicted as would be found in a country in which

the average citizen is a moderate. Both the radical left and the radical right are tiny minorities.

With such a distribution of voters, competition for votes by the two parties or candidates induces them to take ideological positions at the center of the distribution of voters, at M.[1] If each voter votes for the party with the platform that comes closest to that he most prefers, the L party would lose if it took a position even slightly to the left of M, since R would then get all of the votes of citizens preferring points to the right of M, and the votes of those to the left of M, who prefer points closer to R than to L. If each party maximizes the number of votes it expects to win, and voters choose parties entirely on the basis of the ideological position they take, the two parties will take the identical ideological position at M, the position favored by the voter whose preferred position is at the median of those of all voters.

The outcome from two party competition depicted in Figure 10.1 has a certain resonance with what is sometimes observed, or thought to be observed, in two party systems. Candidates are often described as being simply "liberal" or "conservative" or "middle-of-the-road". The complaint is often heard that one cannot tell the two candidates apart. Two party systems produce a competition between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

On the other hand some voters do perceive important differences between competing parties or candidates in a given two party race, and in some particular contexts, say the British Parliamentary election of 1970, or the U. S. Presidential election of 1972, the difference between the competitors will seem large to most voters. Situations such as these can be depicted with the help of Figure 10.2. There are two groups of voters in the polity, an upper and a lower class, and a binomial distribution of the most-preferred

ideological positions of the voters. If every voter votes for the candidate whose position is closest to the one the voter most favors, the competition for votes between the candidates forces them to the median position in the distribution, point M. But if voters choose to abstain from voting, when no candidate takes a position very close to the one they prefer, competition for votes can lead to the two candidates taking positions at points L and R. The dashed lines in Figure 10.2 illustrate the distribution of voters who will vote, if the two candidates are both at M. With this distribution of active voters, candidate L gains more votes around and to the left of point L than she loses near M by moving to point L. The same argument holds for candidate R and point R.

If the two modes of the distribution contain roughly the same number of voters, the situation depicted in Figure 10.2 can be expected to result in fairly dramatic shifts in government policies, when one party is replaced by the other. Such dramatic shifts were observed in the United Kingdom in the sixties and early seventies, as the Labour and Conservative parties took turns nationalizing and denationalizing British industry.

If one of the modes of a bimodal distribution contains significantly more voters than the other, two party competition can result in a single party dominating the electoral outcomes. Indeed this can even happen under a multiparty system, and may describe the resilience of the Social Democratic Party's reign in Sweden, since the 1930s, or that of the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan since the 1950s.[2]

In Figure 10.3 a distribution of voters with four modes is drawn. If alienation causes voters to abstain when no candidate comes close to their most preferred position, one might expect to find four parties competing for votes by taking positions at points A, B, C and D. If the numbers of voters

contained in each mode are roughly the same, each party would have the same probability (0.5) of being among the top two in its share of the vote. If C and D were to merge, however, and take a position midway between points C and D, this merged party might well retain enough support from the voters in the two modes of the distribution on the right to guarantee itself a spot in the final runoff. Even if the parties do not merge, once the first ballot is completed the two winning parties will most likely have an incentive to move to maximize their expected vote in the run-off election. If A and C were the competitors in the run-off, for example, and voters abstained out of alienation when candidates take positions beyond a certain distance from their most preferred points, A would probably have an incentive to move to the right, as would C.[3] Given that a successful party in the first round of voting is likely to have to shift its position in the second round to win, a merger with an adjacent party in the ideological spectrum prior to the first round should appear less unattractive than if a party believed it could win by sticking to the position most preferred by the voters in its mode. Thus, one expects the kind of two-stage, winner-take-all system of government described above to lead to the disappearance of minority parties either by attrition or merger, until one is left with two viable contenders. As we shall discuss in the next chapter, this form of convergence to a two party system within voting districts is observed under the plurality system of voting.

C. Two Party Competition with a Multidimensional Issue Space

When there is a single-dimensional issue space, the assumptions one needs to make about voter preferences and behavior to demonstrate that competition for votes between two candidates leads to an equilibrium seem reasonable. For example, if voter preferences are single-peaked, and voters

vote for the candidate whose platform promises the highest utility, an equilibrium pair of strategies exists for the two candidates.[4]

The assumption that all issues in a campaign can be collapsed into a single ideological dimension does not seem reasonable, however.[5] One person could easily be a liberal on women's rights issues, a conservative on environmental issues. Others could be liberal or conservative on both. To be realistic one wants to at least allow for the possibility that issues are multidimensional. But, the natural generalization of the assumptions that suffice to guarantee an equilibrium with a one-dimensional issue space do not suffice when there is more than one dimension.

Let x and y in Figure 10.4 measure the amounts of two public expenditures, say defense and environment, with tax formulae to finance each activity given. Points 1 through 5 are the ideal points, the combinations of x and y that promise the highest utility levels for 5 groups of voters. Let the numbers of voters in each group be such so that the votes of any three constitute a majority. Then it is easy to show even when each voter's utility function has a single peak, that no equilibrium pair of strategies exists, under the assumption that all voters vote for the candidate whose platform promises the highest utility (Taylor, 1971; Riker and Ordeshook, 1973, ch. 12; Enelow and Hinich, 1984, pp.). Any point one candidate picks as a platform can be defeated by a point--indeed many--that the other could pick.

The standard cycling results with multidimensional voting models assume that each voter votes with certainty for the candidate whose platform promises the higher utility. Thus all members of group 3 vote for either L or R, and a slight shift in either candidate's position could result in the shift of all of the votes of group 3 to the other candidate.

More recent spatial modeling of electoral competition makes the more plausible assumption that there is some "white noise" in the voter/candidate communication process, e.g., because the voters do not know the candidates' positions exactly, or the candidates are uncertain of the positions of the voters ideal points. These models therefore assume that a change in the position of one of the candidates changes the probability of a given individual's voting for the candidate (Hinich, 1987). The closer a candidate's platform is to a voter's ideal point, the higher the probability that that voter votes for the candidate. The closer a candidate's platform moves toward the ideal point of a group, the greater fraction of the votes of that group the candidate receives. But neither candidate receives all of the votes of a group. A proposed increase in income tax progressivity costs the liberal candidate votes from corporate managers, and wins votes from blue collar workers, but some corporate mangers still support the liberal party, while some blue collar workers support the conservative party.

With this key change in assumption about voter responses to candidate positions (or candidate perceptions of voter responses), and some additional, reasonable assumptions, it can be shown that the competition between two candidates for votes leads to an equilibrium pair of strategies.[6] In most models, as in the one-dimensional literature, the candidates adopt the same platforms--some point like M in Figure 10.4. This point M turns out to be a weighted mean of the ideal points of the different groups.

Under the probabilistic voting assumption, each candidate maximizes her expected number of votes. Thus, the candidate of the L Party chooses the platform p_L that maximizes

$$V_L = n_1 f_1[U_1(P_L) - U(P_R)] + n_2 f_2[U_2(P_L) - U_2(P_R)] + \ldots + n_m f_m[U_m(P_L) - U_m(P_R)] \quad (10.1)$$

where n_i is the number of individuals in group $\underline{i}$, $f_i(\cdot)$ is the probability the a member of group $\underline{i}$ votes for $\underline{L}$, $f' > 0$, $f'' < 0$, and $U_i(\cdot)$ is the utility a member of group $\underline{i}$ expects from the given platform. This produces the following first order condition that $\underline{P}_L$ must satisfy

$$n_1 f_1' U_1' + n_2 f_2' U_2' + \ldots n_m f_m' U_m' = 0 \quad (10.2)$$

where U_i' is the marginal change in utility of a member of group $\underline{i}$ at the point $\underline{P}_L$ along the vector running from $\underline{i}$'s ideal point through $\underline{P}_L$. Candidate $\underline{R}$ chooses her platform so as to solve the analogous problem.

Equation (10.2) is the identical first order condition that one would obtain by maximizing the social welfare function

$$W = n_1 a_1 U_1 + n_2 a_2 U_2 + \ldots n_m a_m U_m \quad (10.3)$$

when

$$a_i = f_i'$$

Thus, in choosing a platform that maximizes her expected vote, each candidate chooses a platform that maximizes a weighted sum of the utilities of all members of the polity--a weighted Benthamite social welfare function. The weights placed on the welfare of each group are the changes in the probabilities of each group's voting for the candidate in response to an increase in the utility the candidate's platform promises a member of the group. The more responsive a group is to providing candidates votes as their platforms move toward the group's ideal point, the more weight this group

receives in the social welfare function that is implicitly maximized through candidate competition.[7] These marginal probabilities are the same weights that figure in determining the weighted mean, M, that is the equilibrium to the candidate competition process.

Under different assumptions about the voter's utility calculations, one obtains somewhat different first order conditions. For example, if one assumes that the voters compare candidates by calculating the ratio of their expected utilities under the two platforms rather than the difference, the outcome implicitly maximizes a multiplicative social welfare function--the Nash--rather than the additive Benthamite.[8]

Thus, a reasonable case can be made that the competition for votes in a two party system produces both an equilibrium outcome, and an outcome possessing some fairly attractive properties--at least when this competition leads the candidates to adopt the same platforms. Some probabilistic voting models have demonstrated the existence of equilibria in which the candidates choose different platforms, however (e.g., Samuelson, 1984). These models seem more realistic in that they predict what we sometimes think we observe, candidates/parties having different platforms, and they assume some constraints on where the parties can move in ideological space.

Suppose, for example, that there are limits to how far R can move to the left and up in Figure 10.4, and on how far L can move down and to the right. M might not be attainable for either, and L might find its vote maximizing point to be somewhere on the line connecting 2 and 3, while R's vote maximizing point is between 4 and 5. L goes after the votes of groups 2 and 3, R after 4 and 5, and group 1 is ignored. The situation would be a little like the outcome with the bimodal distribution in Figure 10.2, where the two

candidates took positions at the center of each mode. The normative characteristics of this outcome would be quite different, from those described above with respect to M, however. If say R won the election, it would be only the welfare of groups 4 and 5 that received weight in the social welfare function that R's platform implicitly maximized. The constraint that R could not move far to the left would effectively force it to give zero weight to the utilities of groups 1, 2 and 3. More generally, even when all groups utilities do get a positive weight in the welfare function maximized through candidate competition, we shall be interested in knowing what those weights are when making a normative judgment about the two party system of representative government.

D. Two Party Systems in Practice

The only electoral system extant that closely resembles the one described in Section A is the French system for electing a President. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes cast, and second voting takes place between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot. Thus, the President of France always is elected with an absolute majority of the votes cast on the final ballot.

The President of France appoints both the Prime Minister and the cabinet. The latter resembles more the U. S. cabinet than the U. K. cabinet in that its members need not be, and often are not, elected members of the parliament (National Assembly). If they are they must resign their seats in the National Assembly before taking up a position in the cabinet. Although the President obviously holds a position of much authority in France, the post does not fit the model of this chapter in that the elected President cannot simply proceed to fulfill his election promises once he is elected. All legislation must pass through both the National Parliament and the

Senate, although the government (cabinet) and National Assembly can force legislation through over the Senate's opposition. Thus, in choosing among the presidential candidates, the French voter cannot simply consider the ideological positions of the candidates, the policies they would like to implement if they are elected, and vote for the candidate whose policies come closest to those favored by the voter. The winning candidate will not generally be able to induce the National Assembly to pass all of the legislation he would like to see passed. As in the United States, the party of the President need not have a majority of the seats in the National Assembly.[9] The French voter is wise to consider other factors, when choosing a presidential candidate, like his skill in working with the National Assembly. Since the choice of a President does not necessarily lead to the implementation of his platform, the electoral outcomes from this two party/candidate competition do not have the normative properties described in the previous section.

Candidates for the Presidency of the United States often campaign by making promises of what they will, or will not do, if elected President. They too cannot necessarily deliver on their promises when elected for all legislation must also pass in both Houses of Congress, where the President's party need not have a majority, and the lack of party discipline will prevent him from getting all of his legislation through even if they have.

Although the Presidential candidates and their running mates for the two major parties are always on the ballots in every state, the rules for getting the names of candidates for other parties differ from state to state, and there will typically be some minority candidates in any election, who are missing from some state ballots. The votes in each state are added to determine how the votes of the electoral college will be cast. The existence

of this peculiar institution--the electoral college--creates the possibility that a presidential candidate can win an absolute majority of the votes of the citizens and not be elected President. The absence of the run-off election procedure should no candidate receive an absolute majority of the votes in the electoral college, allows a person to be elected President without having received a majority of the votes of either the citizens or the electoral college.

Given the United States's procedures for electing a President, the voter need have no illusion that the candidate he votes for will be able to implement all of the promises in his platform, even if he is elected. In voting for a Presidential candidate a citizen is not indirectly selecting a set of public policy outcomes that he prefers to those of the other candidate. The normative properties of two party systems that we described in Section C also do not characterize outcomes from the U. S. system of Presidential elections.

Under the parliamentary systems of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, a party that wins a majority of the seats in the parliament can implement the policies it promised in the election campaign. The parties are generally well disciplined and a majority of seats in the parliament allows a party to consistently override the votes of the opposition. Thus, in choosing which party to vote for the citizen in these four countries can assume that the platform of the party he votes for will, or at least could, be implemented should this party when a majority of the seats in the parliament.

But in each country a single member of Parliament is elected from each district, and no allowance is made for a run-off election, should no party receive an absolute majority of the seats in the parliament. Thus, in each

system it is possible to have more than two parties win seats in the Parliament, and for there to be no party with an absolute majority of seats, requiring the same sort of coalition governments that are regarded as PR's disadvantage relative to "two party" plurality systems. It is also possible for a party to win a majority of the seats in the Parliament, while obtaining neither a majority of the votes cast nor even the most votes of any party--an event that occurred as recently as 1974 in the U. K. (Finer and Steed, 1978, pp. 87-8).

U.K.-type parliamentary systems do allow voters to choose among parties that can implement their platforms, if they win an absolute majority of seats, and thus allow voters to effectively choose the platform of policies they most prefer from the set being offered in the election. They thus correspond to this portion of the model described in this chapter. But they also have the negative features of allowing election outcomes in which no party has an absolute majority of the seats, or in which the party with an absolute majority of seats is actually placed second to some other party by a majority of voters. To avoid these twin pitfalls parties must compete for votes in at large elections across the nation, and a run-off must be held should no party receive an absolute majority of seats.

E. Persons or Parties

The procedures in France for electing the President are essentially those that we have described in Section A. If the French President were not empowered not only to appoint his cabinet, but to implement government policies as he saw fit, the French system would be the same as that outlined here. Candidates for the Presidency would presumably run for office on platforms that described the policies that they intended to implement if elected. An incumbent President would be judged to some extent on his

record. In selecting a President the French citizens would in effect be selecting the policies this candidate promised to provide. The President would have the incentive to implement the policies he had promised, the policies that a majority of the population had said that they wished to have, by the necessity for running for reelection on his record. The policies such a system selected could reasonably be expected to have the normative properties discussed in Section C.

The above described system would make an elected President "queen" or "dictator for a term". So long as the President stayed within the constitution, and stepped down gracefully when she failed to be reelected, there is no reason to believe that such a system could not work well. The goal of two party government is to choose governments that are effective and responsible to the people. An elected President at the head of a cabinet and executive branch she has chosen should, in principle, be capable of providing a most effective and yet responsible government.

But one can imagine some leaders, in some countries, at some points in time, who may become so enamored with their role as dictator for a term that they refuse to give up the role after they have been defeated. Illness, illegal activity, or other forms of scandal may make it desireable that a President step down prior to the normal expiration of her term of office. But in the absence of a parliamentary system, impeachment proceedings may be difficult to institutionalize and implement.[10] For this and other reasons, therefore, it is desireable to make the competing "candidates" parties rather than persons in the two party system.

Let us suppose that the system works like the parliamentary system of the U. K., with the modifications that the parties compete for votes in an at large election across the entire nation, and a run-off election is held

between the two leading parties should no single party receive an absolute majority of the votes cast, and thus have a majority of the seats in the parliament.

In such a parliamentary system impeachment is not an issue. Should a party leader become incapacitated, or the need arise to remove her for any other reason, this action can be taken within the party that controls the parliament. For a similar reason, the threat of dictatorship should be much less in a parliamentary system. While a Hitler could choose to tear up the constitution and introduce a dictatorship in a two party system, his fellow party members would probably have some advance warnings that this action was about to take place, and could therefore, if they so chose, act to prevent him. An all powerful president would face no similar checks.

The check on a person or party forming the government in a two party system is the requirement that they stand for reelection. Nevertheless, there may be reason to fear the growth in power of a president, who remains in office for a prolonged period, even if she continues to be legitimately reelected. Such concerns prompted the Constitutional Amendment in the United States limiting a President to two consecutive terms in office. Although obviously effective in limiting the power of the presidency, it has two serious disadvantages. First, it makes a two term President a "lame duck" for half of her term in office, and thus perhaps excessively weakens her power vis-a-vis the Congress in her second term. Second, it removes for the second term the constraint placed upon the President's conduct and policies by the need to stand for reelection.

The problem more frequently faced in the United States than that of having candidates like Franklin Roosevelt, whose personality and policies are so popular that he is reelected again and again, is that of having no

candidate, who seems particularly well qualified and capable. When such a rare person is found, and the polity wishes to reelect her for a third or fourth term, it seems a waste to have to turn her out of office in the fear that she would become too powerful. The potential control a party places on its leader--they can depose her from the party's leadership--would allow a successful prime minister and her party to remain in office so long as they continues to receive the support of the electorate in legitimate elections.[11]

Should a crisis arise in a parliamentary system that is so serious that it splits the governing party, e.g., a Watergate debacle, a relatively smooth transition to a new government is possible as the opposition party is already present in the parliament and can take over the reigns of government until the country can express its judgement on the crisis in the next election.

The presence of both the governing party and the opposition party(ies) in the parliament can hold the governing party to a greater degree of accountability. If, as in the British system, the Prime Minister and her cabinet members must rise each week and answer questions from the opposition concerning major policy issues, the government will be forced to inform the public of its actions and motivations. It cannot dodge tough questions by failing to call a news conference, or leaving the tough questions to a news secretary.

The presence of both the government and opposition parties in the parliament can also have a positive educational effect on the polity. The interested voter can watch on his television or read in his newspaper, the challenges posed by the opposition, the defenses offered by the government. During the interval between elections the voter can not only observe what it is the government is doing and why, but also what the opposition has to say about these policies. Thus, the interested voter should be in a better

position to judge the contending parties at the next election than it would be if the opposition is a "dark horse" appearing out of no where a year before the election.

For all of these reasons we think that the most attractive two party system of government would resemble the British system in that the competition would be between parties with the winning party empowered to select the chief of state (prime minister) and her cabinet. But is such a system, even in an ideal form as proposed here to ensure that there is a single party with a majority of seats that also received a majority of votes, better than an ideal PR system as described in Chapter 9? An answer to this question is our quest in Chapter 11.

Footnotes

1. The classic expositions of this model are by Hotelling (1929) and Downs (1957, pp.). See, also, Davis, Hinich, and Ordeshook (1970), Riker and Ordeshook (1973, pp.), Enelow and Hinich (1984, pp.), and Mueller (1989, pp. 180-2).

   One can think of the competitors as being parties, as in the parliamentary system described in the previous section, or persons as in a presidential contest. Thus, the terms parties and candidates can be used interchangeably. We return to the issue of whether it is better to have the executive formed by a person or a party in Section E.

2. Japan employs a modified form of PR, however, that has elements of a plurality system in it. See ...

3. Whether they in fact have this incentive depends on the degree of alienation among the voters. The primary system in the United States is a double ballot system in which candidates must first defeat challengers within their own party and then of the other party. The optimal position for a candidate to take in the primary differs from that in the final election and leads to candidates shifting positions if that can be accomplished without alienating one's original supporters. See Coleman (1971, 1972), Aranson and Ordeshook (1972).

4. Enelow and Hinich (1984, ch. 2). A voter's preferences are single-peaked if they achieve a maximum at a single point, and if in any direction points further from this maximum provide lower utility.

5. Poole and Romer (1985) find that they can map all of the rankings of 36 different interest groups into only three ideological dimensions, however, with a single dimension providing 94 percent of the explanatory

power.

6. See, in particular, Coughlin and Nitzan (1981a) and Ledyard (1984). For surveys see, Coughlin (1990) and Mueller (1989, ch. 11).

7. For additional discussion of these weights and their normative significance, see Coughlin, Mueller, and Murrell (1990), and Mueller (1989, pp. 200-5).

8. See Coughlin and Nitzan (1981a). On the normative differences between the additive and the multiplicative social welfare functions, see Mueller (1989, ch. 19).

9. The National Assembly of France is elected using a single-member-per-district, double-ballot majority system. For a description of how the French political system functions see Macridis (1978b).

10. A Vice-President could be elected along with the President, of course, and thus the identity of a successor could be known. But one would, presumably, want any impeachment proceedings to be initiated by someone other than the Vice-President. It is also quite possible that the reasons for wanting to impeach the President (e.g., illegal activity) also implicate the Vice-President.

11. Both parties and persons can erect obstacles to effective competition, as seems to have been done by the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan ( ). The more appropriate remedy for this problem, than to have a constitutional provision forcing a popular party out of office, is to have constitutional provisions that facilitate effective competition from opposition parties.